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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Policy on Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the Department of Defense (DoD) not to tolerate or condone sexual harassment within our Armed Forces or in our civilian workforce. In furtherance of this policy, I ask that you redouble your efforts to ensure that in DoD we understand that trust and teamwork are the cornerstones of our success and that sexual harassment breaks down trust and destroys the team. All those who serve in DoD must understand the importance of the policy and adhere to its principle if they hope to succeed or progress within this Department.

Using policy, communication, education and training, enforcement, and assessment as the core elements, I charge you to develop a long-range systemic plan to assess thoroughly all factors related to the effectiveness of your programs to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment. In conjunction with this effort, you should take the following actions.

Policy. Ensure the leaders of organizations for which you have oversight issue clear, concise policy guidance that reaffirms that sexual harassment will not be condoned or tolerated. Ensure that this guidance reflects the guidance included in DoD directives regarding sexual harassment.

Communication. Ensure that policy is disseminated to all levels of command or other organizational units. Make clear the top-down responsibility for the policy and programs. Ensure your leaders reinforce the importance of the relationship of sexual harassment prevention to readiness and professional organizational culture. Ensure feedback systems exist that allow unfiltered communication to leaders at all levels that provides a barometer of the organizational climate. Examine and test the methods used to disseminate your policy guidance and ensure that everyone receives the policy and understands what is expected of them.

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Education and Training. Training and education are the most effective means of providing information to members of DoD. Ensure that military and civilian leaders are personally involved in training. Training must include instruction in understanding accountability and responsibility, characteristics of and prevention of hostile work environments and quid pro quo harassment, reprisal prevention, and the relationship between leadership and a professional organizational climate. Also, ensure that your instructors are provided the skills and competencies necessary to deliver credible training. Further, since sexual harassment is a total force issue, education and training programs should include all civilian employees, as well as local national employees at overseas locations when practicable. Make sexual harassment education and prevention high priority items for review in appropriate inspections of and visits to DoD installations and agencies by the DoD Inspector General and the inspectors general of the Military Departments.

Enforcement. Identify who is accountable for resources, implementation, and responses to violations of your policy. Ensure complaint processing is swift and fair and that resolutions are consistent and equitable. Review cases for consistent enforcement, timeliness, and reprisal prevention. Further, ensure you have systems in place to monitor complaint processing and to keep those directly affected informed of the process and progress. Ensure also that in cases of substantiated discrimination, the rights of the victim are protected and appropriate disciplinary action is taken. Direct all rating and reviewing officials to evaluate individual commitment to prevention and elimination of sexual harassment and document significant deviations from that commitment in evaluation reports.

Assessment. Ensure that formal and informal methods are used to measure the effectiveness of sexual harassment prevention programs. The systemic plan you develop will include the use of a single sexual harassment survey and findings feedback system, the development of a common data collection system, and appropriate measures to assess the outcomes from each core element.

I expect nothing less than your best effort and unwavering support.

William A. G.